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Legislation to Crack Down on Methamphetamines

Existing laws pale in comparison to other hardcore narcotics

(LANSING) – A multi-bill package introduced in the Senate aims to put delivery, possession and manufacturing of methamphetamines on the same criminal level as cocaine and heroin, Sen. Patty Birkholz, R-Saugatuck Township, announced today.

“It is mandatory that the Legislature take the appropriate steps to ensure that the manufacture, delivery and/or possession of methamphetamines is subject to the same stringent standard as other hardcore narcotics such as cocaine and heroin,” Birkholz said. “We are sending a steadfast message to the public that any association with this drug will be penalized on the same level as the most hardcore drugs.”

Provisions of the legislative package and their sponsors are:

- Including methamphetamine and ecstasy with heroin and cocaine delivery and possession offenses so the punishment will increase with the amount of methamphetamine or ecstasy delivered or possessed (Sen. Birkholz). This change will make sentencing for methamphetamine or ecstasy offenses consecutive to any other felony,
- Makes the transport or possession of anhydrous ammonia in a non-approved container a five year felony, (Sen. Ron Jelinek, R-Three Oaks),
- Prohibiting the sale or possession of pseudo-ephedrine over a certain amount (Sen. Alan Cropsey, R-DeWitt), and addresses the sentencing guidelines for the convictions under this offense (Sen. Alan Sanborn, R-Richmond), and
- Requiring the local health department to conduct an environmental assessment of property where methamphetamine has been manufactured to determine whether it is safe for human occupancy. Lack of proper conditions will result in a notice of contamination to be filed with the County Register of Deeds (Sen. Bruce Patterson, R-Canton).

“This is a strong package of anti-drug legislation and I am pleased that Senator Birkholz and her colleagues have moved to address the issue of the manufacture of

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methamphetamine," said Rick Jones, Eaton County Sheriff. "Methamphetamine labs are on the rise in Eaton County and throughout Senator Birkholz' district. This is a dangerous and addictive drug. We must act to prevent any further use and any further manufacture of this drug, or any further contamination of our local neighborhoods."

"Unfortunately, the methamphetamine epidemic is now firmly established in southwest Michigan," said Fred Anderson, Allegan County Prosecutor. "Allegan County alone has seen a one year increase in its crime rate of 38% due solely to methamphetamine laboratories locating in our county. I believe that we have only begun to see the tip of the iceberg in methamphetamine manufacture and usage. Methamphetamine is a very dangerous drug and legislation of this type will allow law enforcement and prosecutors to strongly pursue individuals who manufacture and use this type of narcotic," said Fred Anderson, Allegan County Prosecutor.

"Methamphetamine use and manufacture is a blight to communities throughout Michigan and equally destructive to lives and families," said Birkholz. "It is time that legislation is passed that deals seriously with the terrible affects of this drug."